COMMERCIAL
Pine Bluff, Arkansas
December 8, 1959

They Speak too Soon

The recent blast of the Public Health Service on "Smoking and Lung Cancer" gives us official assurance that if we don't smoke and get lung cancer anyway—it won't be from smoking.

This is about as far as anyone can go in the light of present knowledge, yet, in the effort to make tobacco appear the culprit, this Government report drags out tired old statistics that were presented to the public years ago, yet admits that experimental evidence does not support the theory of smoking as a cause of lung cancer.

The Public Health review also admits that we still don't know the effects of air pollution and occupational exposures and that the tobacco theory does not explain differences in lung cancer incidence rates.

Dr. C. C. Little, scientific director of the Tobacco Industry Research Committee, and who has spent 50 years in cancer research, notes that the report gives little or no attention to new evidence of recent months that:

"1. Finds that people described as the world's heaviest cigarette smokers have low lung cancer death rates compared with people who smoke less but have been long exposed to urban air pollution.

"2. Shows that direct inhalation of tobacco smoke by laboratory animals over long periods of time has not resulted in causing lung cancer in these animals.

"3. Reveals that human lung tissues undergo changes, considered suspicious by some, that are found among both young and old, non-smokers and smokers, while lung tissues 'may be perfectly normal in heavy smokers'.

"4. Confirms the long-established but little-publicized fact that lung cancer occurs more frequently in people who have a medical history of previous serious lung ailments, such as tuberculosis, pneumonia and influenza, indicating a relationship of possible significance."

It will be recalled that the commotion over lung cancer and smoking arose with the discovery that laboratory animals developed skin cancer after being painted with tobacco "tars". Certainly, the failure of smoke inhalation tests is more significant in view of the fact that people smoke tobacco rather than using it as a cosmetic.

All in all, the Public Health review may be criticized for undue reliance on the published opinions of those who have been long committed to the theory that smoking is the principal cause of lung cancer.

On balance, most thoughtful people, we believe, will go along with Dr. Little's summation that "we are only at the threshold of understanding the breadth and depth of the lung cancer problem".

(This editorial was distributed by U.S. Press Association and has been seen in many newspapers.)

POST
Bridgeport, Connecticut
December 1, 1959

Nation Smokes Despite Warning

The controversial issue over the reported incidence of lung cancer and cigarette smoking erupted again last week when U.S. Surgeon General Leroy E. Burney said the weight of evidence implicated smoking as the main cause of the disease.

Based partly on new evidence, it was the Public Health Service's strongest statement yet issued on the subject. The Surgeon General went even further, declaring that no method of treating tobacco or filtering smoke has been shown to be effective "in reducing or eliminating the hazard of lung cancer."

The Public Health head was attacked immediately by the tobacco industry, its scientific director, and others. Dr. Burney's points are not supported by experimental evidence, they declared, and called his statistics "flimsy evidence."

Tobacco shares slumped on the New York Stock Exchange, but there is new evidence to indicate the slump will be short-lived. The Internal Revenue Service, which collects the federal tax on cigarettes, revealed cigarette consumption figures for September, showing shipments of more than 39 billion cigarettes in the month, a billion more than in September, 1958. Total production was up 3.3 per cent, to 42.7 billion units.

The Agriculture Department expects 485 billion cigarettes will be produced this year, a 3 per cent gain above 1958, with even greater production forecast for 1960 because of increased population and a rise in the number of women smokers.

It is obvious that if there has been a decline in cigarette smoking by persons who fear lung cancer, the number giving up the weed is so small it can hardly be measured.

Figures from the Internal Revenue Service are cold statistics, having nothing to do with the health controversy. They are a clear indication that in spite of certain medical statistics, and all sorts of warnings, the American people are not convinced that there is much if any danger in smoking.

Research will and must go on until one side or the other can produce proof beyond any reasonable doubt that cigarette smoking is or is not harmful. Neither group has been able to accomplish that yet, but if the tremendous rise in production is an indication of the public mind, it is plain that it is on the side of the producers.

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Source: https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/docs/gjcm0000